

Majesty consents to *leave* to the subjects of the Most Christian King the *liberty* of fishing in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, *on condition* that the subjects of France only exercise the same *at the distance of three leagues from all the shores belonging to Great Britain*, whether those of the continent or those of the islands in the said Gulf of St. Lawrence." The Gulf is bounded on the north by Labrador. The third article of the treaty of 1857 states that "French subjects shall have the *right*, concurrently with British subjects, to fish on the coast of Labrador," "and of North Belleisle, together with the liberty to dry and cure fish on any part of the coast of Belleisle."

Thus it is clear that the English Minister could not have been ignorant of the fact that the French had no right to fish on that coast. He had also the reports of the colonial authorities. Governor Darling, in July, 1856, strongly protested against the rumoured pretensions of the French, or any such concessions as those made, as preposterous; and the 14th November the Ministry renewed their solemn protest against concluding any arrangement with France without first submitting the particulars to the local legislature, which protest was strongly supported by the Governor.

In examining the history of these fisheries, we find that both in a commercial and national point of view they have long been considered of very great importance. Their value commercially may be estimated from the following facts. In 1517 the first English ship visited the coast of Newfoundland, and found the French, Spanish, and Portuguese engaged in the traffic. In 1615 England had 200 ships there, while the French, Biscayans, and Portuguese had 400. Many of these ships carried 20 guns, 18 boats, and from 90 to 100 men. In the early part of last century the inhabitants of New England had about 1,200 tons of shipping employed in the whale fishery; and with their vessels engaged in the cod fishery they caught upwards of 23,000 quintals of fish, valued at 12s. per quintal, which they exported to Spain and the Mediterranean, and remitted the proceeds in payment for English manufactures. In 1745 the annual value of the North American fisheries was stated to be 982,000*l.* In 1787 the number of British vessels engaged was 402, employing 16,856 men, while, besides large quantities of fish, there were nearly 2,400 tons of oil exported. In 1814 the exports of fish and oil amounted to nearly 3,000,000*l.*

The advantage to this country nationally may be summed up in the words of De Witt: "That the English navy became formidable by the discovery of the inexpressibly rich fishing ground of Newfoundland."

Is it possible that the English Minister could be ignorant of these advantages? If so, surely the eagerness of the French to